

DRAFT RESOLUTION
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION

A RESOLUTION OF THE WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF AQUIFER STORAGE AND RECOVERY PILOT PROJECTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES AND EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the citizens and environment of South Florida could benefit from the implementation of Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Projects associated with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP);

WHEREAS, the proposed CERP ASR components include 333 ASR wells, an unprecedented scale for implementation of this technology;

WHEREAS, the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem (CROGEE), as articulated in the recently released *Aquifer Storage and Recovery in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan: A Critique of the Pilot Projects and Related Plans for ASR in the Lake Okeechobee and Western Hillsboro Area*, concluded that:

1. regional analysis of the subsurface is crucial to evaluating the potential for success for CERP ASR components,
2. biogeochemical reactions in the subsurface and the potential impacts on receiving water bodies at the surface require further investigation and understanding, and
3. thorough monitoring and testing at pilot project sites is necessary to provide data to the referenced regional and water quality investigations;

WHEREAS, the Aquifer Storage and Recovery Issue Team of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, as articulated in its July 1999 report to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group, recommended further analyses of several technical issues relating to ASR implementation, including:

1. characterization of the quality of prospective source waters, spatial and temporal variability,
2. characterization of regional hydrogeology of the Upper Floridan Aquifer: hydraulic properties and water quality,
3. analysis of critical pressure for rock fracturing,
4. analysis of site and regional changes in head and patterns of flow,
5. analysis of water quality changes during movement and storage in the aquifer,
6. Aquifer Storage and Recovery potential effects on mercury bioaccumulation for ecosystem restoration projects, and
7. relationship between ASR storage interval properties and recovery rates and recharge volume;

WHEREAS, further research is warranted to ensure that injection of surface waters that may contain microorganisms into Florida's aquifers will not impact public health and water supplies;

WHEREAS, ASR technology can provide multi-year storage to improve or manage for drought conditions, such as those experienced by Florida during the last year and a half;

WHEREAS, ASR technology may provide cost-effective benefits related to evapotranspiration or seepage losses and requires less land;

WHEREAS, there are many significant concerns that must be addressed prior to the full-scale implementation of the ASR components described in the CERP;

WHEREAS, the Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida, in its *Report on the January 25, 1999 Draft Implementation Plan of the C&SF Project Restudy* (March 3, 1999), recommended that the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, in conjunction with the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Army Corps of Engineers, "should develop an Aquifer Management and Protection Plan for the Floridan Aquifer. This plan should consider existing and proposed ASR facilities, existing permitted withdrawals for water supplies, potential artesian wells to support Biscayne Bay, and potential contamination from treated wastewater,"

IT IS RESOLVED BY THE WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION THAT:

1. The Water Resources Advisory Commission supports the expeditious development, monitoring and evaluation of the ASR Pilot Projects at Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee River, and Western Hillsboro Basin, as well as a City of West Palm Beach demonstration project, and the ASR Regional Study to address the many significant concerns raised concerning this technology, including those raised by the National Academy of Sciences and the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force.
3. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and South Florida Water Management District are urged to conduct all necessary data collection and scientific studies to truly evaluate the ASR technology for the benefit of Everglades Restoration and long-term regional water supplies as outlined in the CERP.
4. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and South Florida Water Management District should develop contingency plans to accommodate potential component performance shortfalls and delays in implementation. Contingency plans should be developed as part of the individual pilot projects and the regional study. If the ASR projects do not perform as anticipated, it will be necessary to have well-designed contingency plans ready for immediate implementation.
5. The CERP implementation process should continue to be as open, inclusive and informed as possible at every stage to ensure a plan that continues to enjoy the broadest public support. Public outreach efforts must be active efforts to fully inform and engage all stakeholders. Special attention must be given to environmental justice issues and the concerns of minority communities around Lake Okeechobee. Additionally, all decisions regarding the implementation of ASR should be made in consideration of public comment.